



The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● JULY 1989

Property of
Graduate Theological Union

DEC 13 1989

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR ?



CONTENTS

	Page
Communicating Channels	1
Theology by the People	3
Our Neighbour	8
Emancipation of Women in Christ's Way.. .. .	9
Sermon Outlines for the Month of August 1989	11
Five Smooth Stones	13
Traditional, Religious Beliefs and Practices Obstruting Self-Expression and Fulfilment of Womanhood	15
News from the Dioceses	18

Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

JULY 1989

EDITOR

THE REV. DASS BABU

1-2-288/31 DOMALAGUDA, HYDERABAD-29 (A.P.)

Articles, reports, should be sent to the

Editor by the 5th of every month

HON. BUSINESS MANAGER

THE REV. M. AZARIAH, General Secretary

Synod Secretariat

POST BOX No. 4906, CATHEDRAL ROAD, MADRAS-600 086

Phone: 471266

All remittances and communications regarding subscriptions and
advertisements to be sent to the Hon. Business Manager

HON. AGENT IN U.K.

Rev. I. L. Thomas

11, CARTERET STREET, LONDON SW1H 9DL

Tel. No. 01-222 4214

HON. AGENT FOR THE U.S.A.

The Rev. Abraham D. Purshothaman, Presbyter

15 COUNTRY Circle, Piscataway

NEW JERSEY - N. J 08854 U.S.A. TEL. No. 201 985-7258

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION PER ANNUM

Subscription in India	Rs. 15.00
Single Copy	Rs. 2.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTION:

	Sea Mail	Air Mail
U.S.A.	.. \$ 4.00	\$ 9.00
U.K.	.. £ 2.50	£ 6.00
Australia	.. \$ 5.00	\$ 10.00
New Zealand	.. \$ 5.00	\$ 10.00

25 Years Ago!

There is a ministry in the church to the extent persons are set apart to perform certain functions. The function of the office in the time of Christ and of the church has been to 'watch over' and to 'serve' such a ministry is necessary for the full well-being activity of the church everywhere and in all ages. There can be no one pattern for the exercise of the function of this ministry.

—Churchman

RATES OF ADVERTISEMENT

Full Page	Rs. 300	per insertion
Half Page	Rs. 150	"
Quarter page	Rs. 100	"
Less than Quarter Page	Rs. 50	"

Hony. Business Manager

Communicating Channels



Christian institutions are the communicating vehicles. They are meant to communicate God's love and His concern for the whole world. When they were established in India their sole purpose was to transform the lives of the people who were groping in the dark—people who were illiterate and ignorant; people who were exploited and marginalised. The churches, schools and hospitals have been the agents of the Creator liberating people's spirits from the bondage of sin; their minds from the bondage of ignorance; their bodies from the bondage of disease. The institutions were termed as 'leaven' which causes fermentation. The parable of the leaven, Matt. 13 : 33 was concerned with making the special point which is frequently missed. The peculiar property of leaven is that it causes fermentation. What our Lord is saying is that the Kingdom of Heaven, its very existence as a society, sets up a ferment, excites attention which may be very disturbing indeed. But nevertheless this is the thing that brings about the change—the social transformation. Christian institutions were living upto that expectation until, say, the dawn of the Independence. Since then there have been a number of changes, often of experimental nature, which to a great extent, destabilised the position of the institutions managed by the Church. The pastoral dimensions, if I may say so, has been lost and the Christian institutions have become mere 'institutions without charisma'.

The seminaries have played an important role in equipping the Church and its institutions in yester years. Most of

the Christian institutions and ordained ministers and devout laymen as the heads were offering the much needed 'Pastoral Care' to the institutions. This Pastoral dimension is missing in most of the institutions today. In order to regain the meaningful role once played by the institutions, at least the heads of the institutions should be theologically trained and equipped to be 'Shepherds of the flocks'. It is not enough, as the tendency has been, to depend upon the so-called experienced always for everything. The day for amateurism is over! We need professional touch in our programmes. Professional training programmes now exist for the specialised ministries and they cannot be ignored if the Church is to be equipped to cope in a changing world. There is a consistent and even demanding cry for training and that need must be met. Christian institutions must make room for trained researches on their staff and use their expertise in the planning process.

Another dimension which is sadly missing in our institutions is the cultural dimension. The recognition of the importance of the bonds between culture and education seems to be one of the most important facts in the recent years. Certain attempts, aimed at giving an increasing importance to the cultural dimension, not only to the preaching of the Gospel but also to the education, are seen. Although these initiatives are still limited and fragmentary they tend to integrate culture of the people into the Social Progress. This gives us a chance to make our institutions as more feasible and effective communicating channels. We have

to change our apathetic attitude to our native culture if we really want to eradicate the feeling in the minds of our neighbours that we are the stooges of the Western culture. Whether this cultural dimension is for the Gospel or for the education it has been knocking again and again at the closed doors of our hearts and if this is employed successfully it will be a tremendously rewarding endeavour.

What we see today is an extremely perplexing situation. Our ancient stabilities have disappeared. We cannot affirm with any certainty that the patterns which we have in our institutions will survive. In many states Church lives in a

perpetual tension with the several governments. As many of our institutions are 'Aided', economic factors could radically change the shape of our institutions. Institutional activities which were once the normal patterns of Church work, at least in the rural areas, are being taken over by governments. We can face all this without either alarm or despondency. Our duty is to see that our institutions become communicating channels, making men and women experience the miracle called Jesus Christ. To accomplish this we need committed workers who should be willing to involve themselves in transforming the social structures which gave rise to such maladies.

—DASS BAI

Peace and Environment

Human beings may be becoming more friendly toward one another but they are increasing their hostility toward the environment, says peace activist Dr. Keith Suter.

Dr. Suter, foundation director of the Trinity Peace Research Institute in Perth, Australia, helped advise the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on an international peace research conference to be held in the Ivory Coast.

The environment will be on the conference's agenda and Dr. Suter found three ways to link the issue with peace.

First, he said, the environment was destroyed by battles. There were still remnants of World War II causing problems.

'Second, peace can be destroyed because of environmental degradation. For example, as Africans overcultivate the land, remove the trees for firewood and erode the topsoil, so tribes are obliged to move out of

their usual areas into adjacent areas. This then sets a chain reaction of tribal conflict . . .

' . . . Finally, there is the question of how peace can be enhanced by disarmament and protecting the environment.' If peace were to break out, he said, army corps engineers could undertake such tasks as preventing flooding of Bangladesh by managing the water flow from the melting snow of the Himalayas.

Another item on the UNESCO agenda is the theme 'peace between generations'. UNESCO is concerned about the way in which certain sections of the population are tending to be overlooked.

Dr. Suter said people born between 1945 and 1956 were the lucky ones. Older people were being pushed to the margins of society while young people were also neglected. 'There is a sense of depression among young people. This is illustrated most dramatically in the frequency of suicides. Suicides are now the second major cause of death in young people in Australia.'

—C.C.A. News

Theology by the People

DR. SAM AMIRTHAM, *Geneva*

It was my privilege in the Programme on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches to formulate and promote the concept of Theology by the People as a special concern in theological education since Vancouver. So, in a context where lay theology has little encouragement and a minimal survival chance, this opportunity is similar to that of the mother who was invited to nurse her own baby, thanks to a king's daughter.

The concept was not, of course, invented by the PTE. There is a strong movement, already spreading like wildfire in the churches all over the world. In the base Christian communities in Latin America, among the *minjung* (masses of people) in Korea, in the village congregations of India and the natives of Australia, Christian believers of all sorts and conditions are taking upon themselves the exciting task of doing theology. They are reflecting on the Christian faith as they live it in daily discipleship. Those who are engaged in struggles for justice and peace and the integrity of creation at the grass roots of the churches are exploring deeper into the resources of their faith. They are interpreting the biblical traditions so as to be motivated and sustained in their struggle. In the Philippines, a programme with the very name 'Theology by the People' was initiated, by the churches some years ago now, where rural peasants gather around the scriptures to study them and to relate their life with the Word of Life in totally new ways. The ecumenical movement has only now begun to take note of these new theological winds of the Spirit 'which blows where she wishes'. Theology by the People is, I believe, theology inspired by the Spirit.

Indeed, some see in this new phenomenon the fulfilment of the prophesy of Joel 2: 28, 29 as once experienced at Pentecost.

'The day shall come when I will pour out my spirit on all men (humankind); your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men see visions. I will pour out my spirit in these days even upon slaves and slave girls.'

Dreaming about God's will, visioning about God's future for humanity, speaking forth God's word—these are theological vocations enabled by the Spirit. The marvel of it all is that this empowerment is now possible not only to old men—male professors of theology!—but to young men and women, office peons and domestic servants. The theological task is being democratised.

'The people of God are the primary agents of the basic theological tasks of the church. The people are fundamentally and ultimately the ones who create the church, who articulate the facts and relate

it to life, who learn and teach its real meaning, who incarnate the faith in every socio-cultural context, who can read and interpret the Bible meaningfully in these contexts, who create living theology through discipleship.'

These words of Ross Kinsler, my former colleague, aptly state the theological conviction behind this concern.

There is a hidden polemic in the word 'by'. Usually theology is done 'for' the people; so people become consumers of theology. Sometimes theological reflection turns around the concept of people as in 'theology of the people', people become the object of theology. 'By' signifies that people are subjects of theology.

A Sampling

In the wine cellars of Switzerland there is a periodic ritual called 'degustation', tasting of wine, really a temptation rite to make you buy more, but also choose from the variety available. Taste and see how good or bad it is. In our country we have tea tasters and coffee tasters. Some tastes are of course acquired. You may not like it at first, but then you learn to enjoy the taste. Let me invite you to taste a few samples.

(a) A simple woman in East Africa used to walk around with a bulky Bible. Never would she be seen without it. Some of the villagers began to tease her. 'Why always the Bible? There are so many books you could read!' Yet the woman kept on her practice neither disturbed nor angered by these unfriendly comments. Once she decided to tell them the real reason. Holding the Bible high about her head she said with a big smile: 'Yes, of course there are many books which I could read. But there is only one book which reads me!' (Story told by Hans Reddi Weber).

This village woman had an intuitive theological insight, we seldom learn from our theological professors and bible experts: People exhibit a capacity for fresh theological perceptions.

(b) During one of the people's struggles related to the Rural Theological Institute of TTS, Madurai, there was a meeting of village people to decide on a particular issue. After long deliberation an agreement was reached. Some of the theological students present, also a few of the villagers said, 'Let us go to the village shrine to ratify it before the deity'. But others protested. 'There is no need to go to the shrine. Our God is present where the people are.'

A biblical insight, affirmed by a group of non-Christians, God is Emmanuel, always with God's people: People have the gift of theological discernment, in this case, to discern God's presence.

(c) Gospel in Solentiname, biblical reflection of the *campesinos* of a fishing village on the shores of Nicaragua, edited by Ernesto Cardenal, now a Minister of Culture in the Sandinista government, is a classic on theology by the people. Here are some excerpts from the 'Campesinos Commentary' on the theme of Jesus' miracle at Cana.

Olivia : 'His hour, which hadn't come, was the hour of his death. He shouldn't be performing miracles yet, presenting himself as the Messiah who was coming to do good and to liberate the people, because then the powerful would kill him. That's why he says to her: "Woman, stop bugging me, my hour hasn't yet come".'

Marcelino : '... But anyway Mary here doesn't seem to be afraid or to pay any attention to prudence, but she urges him to perform the miracle. He didn't want to get into being a Messiah yet and she pushes him into it. It seems like she's saying: "It doesn't matter if they give us a hard time? And she calls the servants."

Alejandro : 'That's the way that every revolutionary mother ought to be with her revolutionary son. Instead of trying to talk him out of it, telling him "don't get involved," she urges him to fulfill his mission. She pushed him.'

Manuel : 'And isn't it interesting that Jesus gets himself involved for a party? His hour will come sooner because he gave wine at a party. It wasn't for something more serious.'

Angel : 'It must be to show us that liquor is good and that people can be happy at a party. We see that Christ didn't think like the Protestants of the Church of the Nazarene, who say that it's a sin to drink or smoke or dance or sing....'

Oscar : 'It seems to me that the wine means joy, a party. To be happy. Enjoyment. Also love. He wanted to make us see that he was bringing enjoyment, happiness, a party.'

Teresita, William's wife : 'But it wasn't at any old party that he performed the miracle. It was at a wedding party.'

Olguita : 'The wedding meant that he was coming to bring love.'

Carlos Alberto : 'God is Love. Humanity is going to get married to Love.'

Angel Mayorga : 'It's obvious. At the beginning of a party you serve Flor de Cana Rum or Victoria Beer. Afterwards, when everybody's loaded, you serve *cuziza*.' (Everyone laughs.)

Olivia : 'The joys of the world are best at first and afterwards they change into disappointments. With the joy that God gives it's just the opposite.'

Marcelino : 'It seems to me that the joy of brotherhood, the perfect society that God is preparing for humanity, that's the great party. But the best wine of that party will be the last one: eternal life.'

There are not too many 'published' commentaries of this nature in our theological seminaries. And yet, people

exhibit a tremendous capacity to read 'the Bible in on hand with the newspaper in the other' (K. Barth relating the message of scriptures to their own concern: be it wine party, political revolutions, life's disappointments or life eternal. People are gifted to draw out the relevance of the Word of God to the world of God.

(d) Now, a taste of a different nature, from Arwin P. Nirmal—

'But the God whom Jesus Christ revealed and about whom the prophets of the Old Testament spoke is Dalit God. He is a servant God, God who serves.

Our housemaid, or the sweeper who cleans commodes and latrines are, truly speaking, our servants. And we prepared to say that my housemaid, my sweeper my *bhang* is my God? It is precisely in this sense that (our) God is a servant God.

But does it mean to say that we are Christian dalits and not just dalits. It means first of all that we proclaim and affirm that Jesus Christ whose follower we are was himself a dalit—despite his being a Jew. It further means that both his humanity and his divinity are to be understood in terms of his dalitness. His dalitness is the key to the mystery of his divine humanity. Let us note some of the features of his dalitness. Let us forget for a moment the wonderful story of his birth, coloured by the angelic choir, the bright star and the wise men. Let us have a closer look at his genealogy as given in the Gospel according to Matthew (Matt. 1:1-17). We seldom read the genealogy carefully. Among Jesus' ancestors there are a few names which should startle and shock us. The first name is that of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah. Secondly, there is Rahab, the harlot who helped the Israelite spies (Joshua 2:1-21). Thirdly, there is the king Solomon. We should not forget that Solomon was an illegitimate child of David. These small details of Jesus' ancestry should not be forgotten as they are suggestive of his dalit condition. He is also referred to as a "carpenter's son". This sounds like looking down upon his father's profession....'

A totally new, radical christology is shaped, when the dalit people's experience is brought into the oyster's pan to conceive theological pearls. (From a paper presented at a Serampore consultation.)

Different Meanings of People and Theology by the People

We can delineate at least three meanings or three levels of meaning of 'people' the way we use the concept.

(1) It simply means the 'non-expert', the ordinary people who have no time or interest for formal theology or theologizing. They read the Bible at a 'devotional' level, seldom able to understand the existence or significance of critical issues in the Bible—textual or critical JEDP documentary hypothesis or synoptical problems would only confuse them—or make them wonder at the preachers' incomprehensible wisdom—as I can myself remember from my early years of preaching ministry.

But even these people are not to be seen as mere recipients of theology, but as contributors, for they have intuitive and life-experience-based understanding of God which needs to be taken seriously, and in dialogue with academic theology for the benefit of both.

(2) *Secondly, it means the poor of Yahweh*, the impoverished, the oppressed, the marginalized, the people who have none other than their God to liberate them, the God on whom they depend wholly and so are called the 'blessed ones' for God's kingdom is a promise primarily to them (Matt. 5:3). The Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed primarily to them (Lk. 4:18). Indeed, it is they who have recognized it as such, and so become also the bearers of this Good News. They have discovered that the God of the Bible is on their side to liberate them and helped God's church to discern 'God's preferential option for the poor'. Milton Schwantes says: 'The people of God is constituted starting with the poor. Impoverished women and men are not one fragment of the people beside which exist others similar to them. The "people of Yahweh" is condensed into the poor, the church of Jesus. Nobody is excluded by this, at the centre around which the whole subsists is the poor.' This brings the justice concern right into the centre of theology.

(3) *People as an inclusive concept* means all Christian people. The people are the whole people of God, the believing and practising, worshipping and acting, the praying and sharing, the struggling and reflecting community of faith. It includes the clergy and non-clergy, the scholars and the others, the men and women, the old and the children.

As we know, there is an ambiguity in the word 'laity', which is often used to denote the non-clergy. Laity comes from 'laos tou theou', the people of God. It sounds as if the clergy are not part of the people. In fact, laity includes clergy, clergy is only a sub-species of the laity. But for paucity of words we may have to continue to use the word 'laity' in this restricted sense.

The nuances draw our attention to three aspects of theology by the people, these I believe have to be kept in some dialectical inter-relatedness and creative tension, each challenging and enriching the others. The subjects or participants in the theological task of the church are the whole people; the process of doing theology today is in community, the focus or perspective of doing theology is justice, the primary constitutive element of God's kingdom (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 14:17).

Challenge to Present Styles of Doing Theology and Theological Education

The participants at a conference held in Mexico in 1985 wrote an open letter to colleagues in theological education everywhere, as follows:—

'As we consider our task as theological educators, we are humbled before God and before God's people. We now see more clearly that we must learn to listen to the stories of suffering people as they tell of their hope and work for justice in the midst of oppression.

We need to learn their language, interpret their experiences and stories for ourselves and others in the light of the gospel and make available to them the experience of the universal church, the wisdom of the Christian tradition and appropriate critical tools.

We need to learn to read the Bible not only with the tools of scholarship but also through the eyes of the poor and the marginalized, in order to understand God's message and make our response as disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to be changed in accordance with this understanding.'

The challenge is to the theologians of the church to redefine their vocation and do theology in community. The challenge is to the whole people of God to take their theological vocation seriously. The challenge to institutions of ministerial formation is to train enablers for the theological task of the whole church and not single person performers. The challenge is to invite all members in the congregations to take their spiritual birthright of doing theology more seriously.

The Ministry of the Whole People of God

The concern of theology by the people is closely related to and in a sense born out of the biblical emphasis of ministry by the people. All God's people are called to be the 'royal priesthood' (1 Pet. 2:9).

The classical passage in this regard is Ephesians 4:11-14:—

'And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.' (RSV)

Here we find that Christ has given many gifts which are the many ministries to the church. The purpose of all these ministries is to equip all the saints, all Christians, for their ministry. The 'fatal comma' which comes after '... teachers,' which in some versions of the Bible does not exist, makes it clear that it is not the apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers who are to do the service, but all the saints. All are called to attain the unity inherent in our faith and our knowledge of God and grow to maturity to be measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ. Theology and ministry are not the rights and privileges of some special people of God, they are the prerogative of all people of God.

According to Ephesians then, the saints, the ordinary Christians, are those who do the service. The evangelists, the pastors and prophets and teachers, are the enablers. So we have a clear division of labour, all who are called to do ministry, and some who are primarily called to enable to do. The ordinary people of God and the ordained people of God both have their ministries. Let us not go into a detailed discussion now of the distinctiveness of their ministries. Bishop Newbigin calls the ordained people the auxiliary ministers and the ordinary people, the primary ministers. I believe that the primary ministers are also privileged ministers, because they are found in those places where ministry in the sense of service to the world is most needed and superbly possible.

What Evanston said then is still valid:

'The real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio and television, in the relationship of nations. Very often it is said that the church should "go into the spheres", but the fact is that the church is already in these spheres in the persons of its laity.'

Lambeth 88 said recently :

'The ministry of the lay Christian in the midst of everyday affairs of this world is often the point at which the world and the church meet in person to person encounter. It is through such encounter that the grace of Christ is often experienced. The buildings, the bureaucracy and other resources of the church are not ends in themselves but must be seen to support such ministry.'

It is my conviction and plea that if ordinary Christians are the primary and privileged ministers in the world, they must be equipped and enabled to do their ministry truly and effectively. Theological education for the whole people of God is one way of such an equipping process.

Some Implications for Christ's Mission

If we agree that 'theology by the people' and 'ministry by the people' challenge churches today, I think we need to begin to see some new possibilities for the church's mission here.

Firstly, we need to initiate a programme of theological learning for the whole people of God so that everyone may understand the fundamentals of christian faith, can adequately articulate their faith and live by it. This can be done only in dialogue with their own understanding and experience, the scriptures and the Christian tradition.

Extension education is most suitable for this purpose. We have the external studies programme of the Senate of Serampore, TAFTEE courses, etc. They are still rather biased towards traditional learning of the content of the theology, but can be restructured. TECCA programme of TFS is such an attempt. More fundamental is the need of a new awareness that everyone needs theology, and that it is available to everyone.

To my knowledge the only programme among the WCC member churches that has taken this aspect seriously, is the 'Learning on the Way and Funding Theological Education' of the United Church of Canada. (*Theological Education in the 80s*, a report approved by the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, United Church of Canada, Sudbury, Ontario, 1986).

This report first of all recognizes *the right of every Christian to learn* :

'According to their stage in faith and their situation in life, every member of the church should be able to have access to learning opportunities enabling them to respond faithfully to the call to the way of discipleship. Since access to learning opportunities is a right of all members, all the church's educational centres have a particular responsibility to ensure that this right is available to every one. One of the major tasks before the whole church is to motivate people to deepen their understanding of the faith in relation to the life they live and to help all assess what learning is needed to equip for faithfulness in complex and changing times. The educational resources of the church need to be geared to this task in this way, the right to learn will become a reality.'

Among other things, the church resolved 'to invite all parts of the church to recognize and celebrate the educational centres' contribution to the church's mission at one or more specific periods of time during the church year'; 'to invite all the theological schools to consider

redefining their mission so that at least one school might serve principally as a research and resource centre for theological education for laity' and to set apart a fund called 'Fund for Learning in the Church' at the rate of 1% of funds gathered for all purposes, such a proposal is of such a radical nature that one can expect some radical renewal in the church when this vision for equipping all God's people begins to be transformed into action.

Secondly, we need a programme that will encourage and enable and inspire the best minds and intellects of our people to become participants and contributors to theology. It is no exaggeration that 99% of the church's resource in equipping theologians are spent on future clergy. While we need a theologically well qualified clergy in the church's parish ministry, we need theologians also in the frontier of other areas of knowledge—philosophy, science, economics, law, politics, religions, etc. The Church of South India has had a glorious tradition of outstanding lay persons in the past like R. D. Paul, D. A. Thangasamy, Professor Chandran Devanesan, etc. There are some very active at present too. We need to increase their tribe. But when I study their biographies I find that they all had opportunities for specialized study and to sharpen their critical theological thinking. Precious little is done now to identify such persons and encourage them. Imagine how many of our future clergy get scholarships for three years or more of study in India and then a year or so for ecumenical experience and study abroad, and compare this to the number of lay persons who are similarly enabled. While the secular job situations and career possibilities make it difficult to make use of such opportunities I am sure some able persons can be challenged. We must also offer opportunities for persons to do formal theological education who may not want to enter ordained ministry but other forms of Christian ministries. The presence of such a group of persons in the student body in a seminary will definitely change the style and quality of learning itself, for the better. The presence of such persons would also make a difference in the nature and quality of discussions in our diocesan meetings and synodal meetings, I believe, and above all in the theological awareness of our churches.

Thirdly, we need a programme to equip Christians who have secular vocations to offer their Christian ministry in those fields, understanding the nature of their ministry and the significant changes it will make in the exercise of that ministry. For example, I have always wondered about the Christian doctors—so many of them in South India—whose main preoccupation (like their colleagues in the profession) seems to be to become as wealthy as possible as soon as possible. I have seen some of them even giving free treatment to pastors! I wonder if they themselves and their pastors have recognized that this is a case of exploiting the poor and the sick by the use of medical knowledge. If the doctors can be helped to see that they are participating in the healing ministry of Christ and therefore of the church and their primary vocation is to be apostles of healing and wholeness in the community, what a change that would bring. A decent earning and living can become a secondary purpose in life. Or if the Christian lawyers saw their area of ministry as protecting the rights of the poor and defending the defenceless, would that not be a new form of Christian ministry?

Imagine that by prayer, reallocation of resources and creative planning, a programme to mobilise the potential for Christian witness of all Christians—lawyers, doctors, government servants, teachers, technicians, business people, nurses, social workers, political leaders, members of

liament and assemblies, police personnel auditors, etc. were to be formulated and implemented, and that all these persons be motivated to live out their Christian faith amidst the hard realities of Indian society today. They will then be transformed into Christian ministers in the fields of justice and health care, teaching and feeding, caring and administering, politics and economics. Imagine that they are also convinced that they are 'ordained' for the above mentioned ministries in the world. What a difference it would make to the life of the church and above all, for society.

Indeed that is what all Christians are called to be. All baptised Christians are also 'ordained' to participate in the ministry of Christ. Those who are baptised into the death and resurrection of our Lord are all called to follow him who came 'to minister and not to be ministered unto.' I have always wondered if the Indian church could not develop such special ordinations and commissions to recognize publicly such ministries. They would then be the real 'deacons', ministers of the church.

Finally, we need to challenge our ministers, theologians (lay and ordained) and theological schools about the styles in which they do theology. For what purpose; is it not for greater justice in society, and for inspiring the oppressed to struggle for their liberation? On whose behalf; is it not to be on behalf of the poor and marginalized? From which perspective; is it not from that of the down trodden and those who belong to the underside of history? These have become new questions today in doing theology. The theologians today are called to be with the people and on behalf of the people. We see only few signs of such a new theological movement, but wherever they do appear, the church seems to become nervous and suspicious. I believe it is a call for theological conversion for all of us. Most of us in this gathering—bishops, pastors, informed lay persons, have a part to play if theology has to serve this new purpose, that of God's justice and God's kingdom. Earlier I quoted A. P. Nirmal who has begun to do this from the perspective of the dalits. Some women have started doing this from the women's perspective. I recently read a meditation of Elsa Tamez on Lazarus with the self-explanatory title 'The woman who complicated the History of Salvation'.

A Christmas story by Aruna Gnanadasan tells of the sufferings of a pregnant woman, a construction worker who comes home in the evening from work to give birth in the slums. As tears of joy well up in her eyes, the baby seems to be saying 'why woman, why do you hum by and passively acquiesce in all this which oppresses you? Get up and resist. You are the woman of the Magnificat.' And Mary smiles, for today is born to her a son.

Such theological reinterpretations and reconstructions need to be encouraged, to be supported.

Here is a challenge for the Church of South India and for the church in India in general. Could we dream together a dream whereby—

- (i) Resources, material and personnel are set apart on a priority basis for the theological formation of the laity, possibly through mobile institutes and extension centres;
- (ii) All theological schools reorient the training given to the future clergy and at the same time get directly involved in the formation of laity which will then in turn influence and change the former;
- (iii) Certain theological schools take up the special vocation of doing research, prepare curricula, innovate new patterns for adult theological education;
- (iv) That workshops be organized to reorient leaders so that theology can be done from the perspective of God's poor.

When Bishop Premasagar was the General Secretary of the Synod, I had the privilege of initiating with him a conversation which led in God's providence to the setting up of the Pastoral Aid Department in the CSI, which fosters continuing theological education to the ordained people of God and through them a systematic bible study programme in the whole church. It is my prayer as I wrote in a recent article in his honour that very soon a similar department or rather a PROGRAMME with adequate resources will be set apart for equipping the 'laity' also. That is a priority in mission.

Our Neighbour

RT. REV. K. C. SETH, *Shoranur*

Text : Matthew 9 : 36

We live in a world in which people are not concerned about others. They are too selfish and self-conserved. They are too busy to think about others. In foreign countries, even in villages, they do not know who their neighbours are. I lived in a village in USA for a few days. I asked the house owner about their neighbours. Then he narrated to me an interesting incident, which happened a few weeks ago. One day he saw from his neighbours home 'Samans' being loaded in two big lorries and being transported. He thought that his neighbour was transferred and he was shifting all his belongings. The next day when the Police van and Police arrived, he found out that his neighbours' belongings were lifted away by burglars by breaking open the house. So little my host knew about his neighbour that he did not know what was happening. The Psalmist says, 'I look to the night and watch, but there is none to take notice of me, no refuge remains to me, no man cares for me (Ps. 14 : 2, 4).

In Luke 15 : 16 we find the prodigal Son was in exile from his father's house. Incidentally, his elder brother was an exile from his father's home. The Prodigal was starving and no one gave him anything to eat. In our country there are millions of people who are placed in similar situations like that of the Psalmist and the Prodigal Son. In our cities, people live in flats and apartments. No body knows who the neighbour is. *Unless we know who our neighbour is, we do not know about his needs.* There are many people around us who are lonely and weary and who feel that nobody cares for them. Jesus had compassion on such people. He had compassion on the crowds when He saw them as 'sheep without a Shepherd. He was moved with compassion when He saw a leper who fell down on his knees and asked for cure (Mark. 1 : 40-42). It is recorded that He stretched out His hands and touched the leper, forbidden for a Jew—and cleansed him. The only son of the widow of Nain was dead and was being carried out for burial. Jesus had compassion on the condition of the pitiable condition of the widow, touched the coffin and raised the young man. He had compassion on the milling hungry crowds who had been listening to Him for days together and fed them. Jesus in compassion touched the eyes of the blind men at Jericho and immediately they received their sight. (Matt. 20 : 34).

The Good Samaritan had compassion on the man who fell among robbers. He poured oil and wine and dress his wounds, took him to the inn and stayed with him that night. The next day before departing he gave the innkeeper some money and promised to reimburse whatever expenses he incurred for the wounded man (Lk. 10 : 25-35). The good Samaritan was available to the needy persons who fell among robbers. Jurgen Moltman explains the Samaritan as the availability of Jesus to the needy world. St. Paul says Jesus emptied Himself. Our Moderators and Dr. Van Beek meant the same when they said 'come down' or to be with the poor in their struggles and suffering for human dignity and justice. The word Compassion is not mere sympathy. It is a feeling that moves one to action. In Mark 2 : 1-12, we read that few people carried a man sick of palsy on a bed and lowered him through the roof to the place where Jesus was. These few men had compassion on their sick neighbour and they moved them to action in faith. David Livingstone was moved with compassion on the people of Africa and set out to win them for Christ, braving all the dangers of the so-called 'dark continent'. On his gravestone at West Minister Abbey it is written 'Other sheep I have'. This brings us to another dimension of compassion where we live in a pluralistic society among other living faiths. Do you know your neighbour? Do you know his needs? Are you available to him? Have you compassion on him? Mother Teresa is available for the sick and destitutes. I was a student in the Bishop's College, Calcutta when she started her work. One day she was walking through a street in 'Kalighat' when she saw a leper begging for food. His legs were rendered insensitive by the disease and he did not realise that a rat was eating the wound on his leg. Mother Teresa was moved with compassion. With the help of her sister friend she took the leper to the house where she was staying. She had only five rupees with her then. Thus she started the 'Sisters of Charity' which has homes all over the world now.

St. Paul says, 'Let each of you look not only to his own interests but into the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2 : 4, 5).

Sermon Preached at the consultations on the Evaluation of Priorities for the Mission of the Church.

Emancipation of Women in Christ's Way

MRS. C. KAMALA SAROJINI DEVI, *Nandyal*

The Christian churches are celebrating 'the decade women' with a great reformatory zeal to raise the standard of women in society. The Woman's wing has started various programmes to change and raise the position of women in the society. Woman has been looked upon by man whether in the East or the West. She has been considered a weakling in every respect and thought unworthy to occupy important place in her community par with man. No country is free from the domination of man. The society from the past has substantially put down the status and rights of woman lower than man. This prolonged, constant and continuous suppression of woman has made them to agree to their fate and suffer inferiority passively all these years. Should this continue forever? 'No', says the present woman. At a right time she shakes off her chains of bondage and frees herself and rises up to build a new society. But, it might sound paradox this is not possible unless man changes his attitude towards woman. Man, who had been an obstacle in the progress of woman till now, should enable himself to put confidence in woman and instil a new hope, a sure strength and a fearless forward nature in her.

When God created woman, He made her as a helper for man. He separated the woman from him and made him as a helper but not as many uneducated men think, a slave to work for him and his family. Man may think that woman is a weakling and the sole cause for bringing sin into this world by her disobedience to God. But actually weak was the man who disobeyed God. Then what way is he greater and stronger than woman? And, after all, did not show any distinction between man and woman.

The study of the dealings of Jesus with women explain and show the example to every Christian man about his treatment of woman. First and foremost, God, when He chose to become man, He chose to be born through man. 'Lo, He abhors not the virgin birth'. So we see, God gave the utmost respect to woman. If woman has been slighted by God, would He choose to bring salvation to humanity through a woman? The Catholic world looks upon Mary, the mother of Jesus, with great reverence and piety. The worship of woman is also a tradition in our country from ancient times. The ancient world worshipped woman as 'mathru devatna'.

In this same country, we also find how the birth of a baby is looked upon with displeasure. The birth of a girl is the most unwelcome thing in the family. Why? Sons are set apart and brought up differently on the grounds that they are girls. How often we find parents talking girls saying 'Remember, you are a girl'. All these distinctions are man made. We have an instance in the New Testament. We read about the twelve year girl, who is the daughter of Jairus, the synagogue

ruler. Jesus stood in the midst of a large crowd who were waiting to hear him. But when Jairus told him about his daughter, who was dying, Jesus did not put it aside as an unimportant thing. He left the crowd and followed Jairus. He walked to his house for the sake of the 'dead girl'. He raised her from death and ordered her parents to give her food. What great love Jesus had for that girl! How much He was concerned in giving new life to her. If the son of God can show so much love for a girl, should we not love our own girls?

Let us see how Jesus treated the ordinary sickly woman who suffered from bleeding for twelve years. In the gospel of Mark we read how on his way to the house of Jairus, he stopped and spared time to speak to this simple woman who was trembling with fear. In the midst of so many people and in the midst of his hurry to go to the house of Jairus he had found time and cared to speak to this simple woman.

We can also see how Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery. In the present society how do we treat the adulterous woman? In a very mean way. In those days such a woman was worth only to be stoned to death. That was the law of Moses. The men were ready to follow the law to the very letter. Every man had a stone in his hand ready. But she was dragged to Jesus for His verdict. The great preacher who taught us to 'cast out the beam in our eye to see clearly the mote in our brother's eye', said to them, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her'. The result was there was none who was found it worthy to stone her. Indeed, how can any man judge another as sinful? But God, the embodiment of love and who is powerful to forgive sins, lovingly says, 'Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more'. That was the verdict of the saviour of the world. Such amazing love and tolerance for the sinful! Why doesn't our society look with the same love and tolerance, instead of spitefully turning away from such? The loving care of Mother Theresa is transforming many sinful souls to salvation. If only men could be considerate, understanding and honouring the status of women, most of the ills in the present modern society can be cured.

Now let us look at another picture of Jesus in the house of Simon, the leper. There a woman in the city, who was a sinner, brought an alabaster box of ointment. She washed his feet with tears, wiped them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet. The Pharisees thought why Jesus allowed that woman to touch His feet. But Jesus viewed her differently from those men in the house. He contrasted the woman with Simon, his host. What he could not do as a host, had been done by this woman, all because she loved Jesus more than Simon loved Him. Jesus forgave her sins and she loved Him for it. If every sinner could be viewed in the same way, as Jesus did, results would be astonishing. The woman's sins have

been forgiven. She became famous along with Jesus. The story of Jesus has carried her name all around the world. What astounding privilege !

Now-a-days in society, we find the low caste people being looked down upon by the so-called high caste people. The women of these low caste people are abused and ill used. But the example of Jesus, when he conversed in detail with the Samaritan woman is note worthy. He was on His father's business—saving the lost soul—and though born as a Jew he spoke to her at leisure to the surprise of His disciples. He says He has meat to eat that ye know not of ! His meat was to do the will of God and to finish His work. How far are our men engaged in a task like this.

The widows in our society are also looked upon with prejudiced eye. They are considered as something to shun on our auspicious days. Even in the Christian society, the widows are set aside as unlucky. (If the cities have changed in this aspect, the abounding villages in our country do uphold this still.) But what does Jesus think about them. He never dismissed them as unwanted but talked and tried to relieve them and please them. Once Jesus was watching how the people were casting money

into the treasury. A poor old widow threw in two mites which make a farthing. Then he told his disciples that the old widow cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. Jesus could appreciate the old widow who gave all that she had, even all her living. The present society would publicly mention and thank the rich who donate large amounts out of their surplus wealth and would not care to recognise the generosity of poor women. He had mind to speak about the woman, who was poor and who was a widow.

If the Christian society, with this mind of Christ, treat women with respect, love, understanding, tolerance and a right attitude, won't our society turn out to be one that would facilitate the all round development of women. Do not hinder her saying that you are not strong, your demands not legitimate, your position not equal to and your guidance not wise for the community of giving chance. Women can rise up to build a new community hand in hand with men. Let equal wages, equal chance, equal percentage of seats and reservations be given to women along with men, in political, social and religious fields. I am sure then it would be very Christian to move in that direction. The only way for us to follow is Christ's way. He is our perfect model.

C.L.S. RECENT PUBLICATIONS

FROM MISSIONS TO CHURCH IN KARNATAKA—N. C. Sargant	Rs. 47.00
PAUL D. DEVANANDAN, Vol. II—Ed. Joachim Wietzke	Rs. 65.00
BIOGRAPHY OF K. T. PAUL—H. A. Popley	Rs. 24.00
ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN AND HINDU BHAKTI—T. Dayanandan Francis	Rs. 10.00
TEACHING BIOLOGY : A MODULAR APPROACH—W. A. F. Hopper	Rs. 60.00
CHURCH ON THE MOVE—(Festschrift to the Most Rev. P. Victor Premasagar) Ed. H. S. Wilson	Rs. 20.00
CHRISTIANS IN ANDHRA PRADESH—Paul D. Wiebe	Rs. 38.00
STUDIES IN MISSIONARY HISTORY : REFLECTIONS ON A CULTURE-CONTACT—S. Manickam	Rs. 34.00
SALVATION AND SECULAR HUMANISTS IN INDIA—R. Paulraj	Rs. 40.00
GUIDE TO CHILD CARE—Leelavathy & Chandra	Rs. 10.00
REGIONALISM AND RELIGION: THE TAMIL RENAISSANCE AND POPULAR HINDUISM—Charles A. Ryerson	Rs. 42.00
SENT FREE—Emilio Castro	Rs. 8.00
STRUGGLE IS LIFE—Gnana Robinson	Rs. 18.00
ONE BUTTONHOLE A DAY—Susi P. David	Rs. 6.00
MA NEE—Hephzibah Jesudasan	Rs. 22.00
THE RELEVANCE OF HINDU ETHOS FOR CHRISTIAN PRESENCE—T. Dayanandan Francis	Rs. 38.00
SADHU SUNDAR SINGH : THE LOVER OF THE CROSS—T. Dayanandan Francis	Rs. 4.00
TWELVE JOHANNINE STUDIES—O. M. Rao	Rs. 25.00
RELIGION AND POWER : ESSAYS ON THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN MADRAS—Lionel Caplan	Rs. 30.00
THE THEOLOGY OF DR. SAVARIRAYAN JESUDASON—L. C. Richard	Rs. 6.00
JESUS CHRIST OUR PASCHAL LAMB—Gnana Robinson	Rs. 5.00

C.L.S. FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

SUCCESSION FROM JOHN—Alan Rudge
TEACHING CORRECT STANDARD ENGLISH—I. D. Asirvatham
SIDING WITH THE POOR—Gnana Robinson
A JOURNEY THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION—Gnana Robinson
SADHU SUNDAR SINGH IN SWITZERLAND—Alys Goodwin
YES, GOD MADE MAN—Steve Borgia

For your requirements, please write to

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY
Post Box No. 501, Park Town, Madras-600 003

or to its branches at

BANGALORE, COIMBATORE, COCHIN, HYDERABAD, KODAIKANAL, MADURAI, TIRUVALLA AND TRIVANDRUM

Sermon Outlines for the Month of August 1989

Prepared by

REV. J. M. JOGULA, M.A., M.Th., Dharwad.

1989 : 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Passages :

Ruth 2 : 1-7, Ephesians 4 : 25-32,

Mark 4 : 26-32.

Theme : Service in Daily Work.

It is said 'Work is Worship'. Work is also service. Work becomes service when it is done with faithfulness. We are called not to be slaves but serve with gladness. Our daily work must be a service which helps us and all others.

Ruth 2 : 1-7 :

She has been working since early morning and has now stopped to rest for a while' (v. 7). Ruth came to the field of Boaz to gather left over grain. As a foreigner, she was asked to do that. She found favour with others because of her hard labour. She was not lazy. She did not try to steal. Her sincerity was rewarded. Her work was for her benefit only but for her mother-in-law also. While working she was also serving her mother-in-law.

Ephesians 4 : 25-32 :

Living a life according to the standards of Jesus Christ, drives away the Devil. If a chance is given to the Devil, he will spoil all relations in the family, in the Society and in the spiritual life.

Paul advises the Ephesians to work in order to earn an honest living. This will help not only the person who works but enables him to help the poor. In our daily work we have privilege of serving.

All negative expressions of emotions be got rid off, that cordial relationship is maintained. This is also necessary in our working places.

Mark 4 : 26-32 :

Parable of the Growing Seed : Man scatters/sows seed. It is his labour which prepares the ground and sows the seeds. But it is God who gives life and growth. When it is the man who harvests. We, together with God, reap, so that we get the fruit.

Parable of the Mustard Seed : The seed is very small when it grows it becomes a very big tree. Our labour may be negligible but what we gain will be plenty.

- (i) Do not boast about our efforts.
- (ii) Do not neglect which is very small.
- (iii) Remember—God works with us in our daily work.

13-8-1989 : 13th Sunday after Pentecost.

Bible Passages :

2 Kings 5 : 1-14, James 5 : 13-18,

John 9 : 1-11.

Theme : Heal the Sick.

Healing ministry finds an important place in the total ministry of the church. Our Lord who came to save the lost mankind, healed the sick, raised the dead to life, cast out the evil spirits. Jesus healed both curable and incurable diseases. (Mark 1 : 34).

It was through healing mission that the missionaries of early times in our land won many for Christ. Love and concern shown during the times of sickness and epidemics appealed to the people. The Gospel of Jesus Christ changed the attitude of our people in India towards suffering.

1. 2 Kings 5 : 1-4 : A Leper is healed.

Prophet Elisha who lived in Samaria had the gift of healing. The Israelite slave girl knew this and she tells about it while she was in Syria. Naaman, the Commander of the Syrian army was suffering from leprosy. It was incurable disease. No one in Syria was able to heal his sickness. He came to Prophet Elisha and was healed when he obeyed his words.

2. James 5 : 13-18 : Prayer has power to move the Lord to heal.

Prayer made in faith will heal the sick person : the Lord will restore him to health and the sins he has committed will be forgiven.

Note that the Lord is the healer and we will be His instruments in healing process when we pray in faith. Faith of the one who prays and faith of the sick person also count in the process of healing. Forgiveness of sins is also involved in healing process.

Jesus Christ has invested this power of healing with those who have faith in Him.

3. John 9 : 1-11 : Jesus heals a man born blind.

(i) His blindness has nothing to do with his sirs or his parents' sins.

I see in this that Christ denied the doctrine of Karma which was and is prevalent in our country among Hindus. Christ accepted physical deformity which is caused because

of certain biological malfunctioning. Jesus took this to glorify God.

(ii) *Healing Process*: Today many pray and wish to have instant healing. Yes, many were healed instantly at the words of Jesus. But in this incident Jesus did not heal him as he did in other instances. Healing process is explained in vs. 6 and 7.

Remember God is the healer and we are his instruments in healing process.

20-8-1989 : 14th Sunday after Pentecost.

Bible Passages :

Isaiah 1 : 12-17, Acts 8 : 26-40,

Matthew 3 : 1-17.

Theme : Baptism.

'The Christian baptism is rooted in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, in his death and in his resurrection. It is incorporation into Christ, who is the crucified and risen Lord : it is entry into the New Covenant between God and God's people. Baptism is a gift of God and is administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' (WCC : Faith and Order Paper No. 111, B.E.M. P. 2.) !

1. *Isaiah 1 : 12-17 : 'Wash yourselves clean.'*

In Isaiah God warned the people and expressed his dissatisfaction of their religious offerings and celebrations. Their hands were covered with blood i.e. all kinds of evil deeds. They had to give up all their evil deeds and turn to God in order to receive his blessings.

In baptism there are elements of repentance and cleansing.

2. *Acts 8 : 26-40 : Philip and the Ethiopian Official.*

Philip explained the passage which foretold the sufferings of Jesus Christ. He proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ. Then the Ethiopian requested for baptism and Philip baptised him. By this the Ethiopian accepted a new faith and thus became a follower of Christ, a member of the Church.

3. *Matthew 3 : 1-17.*

(i) *Baptism by John the Baptist 3 : 1-11.*

John the baptist came and ministered to prepare a way for Jesus Christ.

He preached repentance. People confessed their sins and he baptised them in Jordan.

John himself proclaimed that the baptism to be given by Jesus is different—'he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire'. Jesus' ministry brings judgement.

Purification and cleansing of sins is implied in the above made statement.

(ii) *Baptism of Jesus 3 : 13-17.*

(a) Jesus identified himself with sinful human beings and received baptism from John the baptist.

(b) Jesus received the Holy Spirit and the blessings from God, the Father.

We baptise with in water, but God sends down the Holy Spirit and confirms his blessings.

27-8-1989 : 15th Sunday after Pentecost.

Bible Passages :

Isaiah 52 : 1-6, Romans 8 : 1-13,

Matthew 5 : 1-20.

Theme : Freedom.

Freedom—independence : freedom—free to choose freedom used in right direction helps growth. Freedom is the gift of God. It is liberation from oppressive forces.

(1) *Isaiah 52 : 1-6 : Political freedom needs spiritual revival.*

God will rescue Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be liberated and restored to its previous glory and splendour.

God liberated his people from the bondage of Egypt and later from Assyrians, Babylonians and others. Their exile in other countries was taken as punishment for their sins. Israelites were called for repentance and revival of their spiritual life.

(2) *Romans 8 : 1-13 : Spiritual freedom.*

(i) Life in the Spirit is the life in freedom.

(ii) Christ has brought liberation—free from the bondage of sin and death.

(iii) Following human nature is to be in bondage which leads to death.

(iv) Those who live obeying the Spirit, please God and have life and peace.

(3) *Matthew 5 : 1-20 : Life of the liberated people : Freedom in life situations.*

Living in freedom requires a disciplined life.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave several instructions which are helpful for a happy life.

(i) Live for Jesus—face persecution from the world.

(ii) Be like salt—make others' life meaningful and preserve others to live with Christ.

(iii) Live like a light—shine among people—bring light to others.

(iv) We should practice all that is required for a fruitful life.

FOR THE PEOPLE

If I were a bird
and able to fly afar,
I would like to be a white dove
to guide the people to freedom.

If I were a grain of sand,
I would throw myself down
to make a path for the people.
If I were the cloud in the sky
I would shelter and bring rains
to the rice field.

I would sacrifice my life
for the suffering people
I would sacrifice myself
no matter how many times
I would have to die.

—ANNA

Ecumenical Decade Churches in Solidarity with Women

Five Smooth Stones!

G. M. CUSHIN, *Kotagiri.*

Five smooth stones—What has that to do with primary education and training? David, the shepherd boy had an *observant*. He also had *imagination* and *initiative*—a certain amount of *patience*. In addition he *cared* for his flock. Five qualities which help in dealing with children. When he selected 5 smooth stones from the stream, he was making use of seemingly waste material. He had had plenty of time whilst providing water for the sheep to observe what was actually in the stream. He used *imagination* and *initiative*, when he saw the potential of these stones—ideal for using with his sling to drive off, or kill the wild animals who attacked his flock. He must have spent a lot of time and patience practising his shot with these stones, until he could aim accurately with devastating effect. He cared enough for his flock to protect them. What an example for us today!

Many people—including parents, are looking on pre-school children as miniature scholars and ultimate bread winners. They have no concept of the harm done to these children if they are forced into formal reading, writing or arithmetic before they are ready for it. We see minute children trudging home from nursery school with a bag full of books—for their home-work. The children are not allowed the joy of learning through play and discovering things for themselves. So much can be done to make this informal learning an exciting introduction to life.

In setting up small units for pre-primary education in a rural area, some people have been anxious about the cost. What about all the different teaching aids which should be provided? Well, what about it? Like David, the shepherd has to look around and see what can be obtained locally, at little or no cost. For instance where there are eucalyptus trees, there are very attractive seeds. They can be used for counting, for making patterns and even for making letters or numbers. If any coloured powder or paint is available, the seeds can be painted red, blue, yellow and green. So that colour recognition and sorting can be done. The flame of the forest tree has magnificent orange seed pods which produce a lovely sound when shaken. A very good musical instrument to accompany songs and games. The back of calendars provide papers for pictures. A little flour and water makes a satisfactory gum with which to stick sweet papers or coloured pieces of paper onto a background to make a pattern or picture. Look around to see the potential in waste material—used match-sticks, tiny pieces of cloth from the tailor, old matchboxes, cards, used envelopes, boxes of all shapes and sizes, printed coloured notices, cardboard, silver paper, seashells. The list seems endless and it is, if you are observant and have some imagination. Think twice before throwing away what we term as waste. Sand, soil and clay are basic materials for play, investigation and experiments.

There should be no rigid time-table for this Pre-primary education. There may be fixed points for arriving, departing and meals (if they are provided) but in between, the pro-

gramme should be flexible. For instance if the sound of a helicopter is heard whilst the children are inside the building let them go out and see it. Don't think 'It is not on the time table' or 'the children should not be outside now', let them see this and talk about it afterwards, so that their experience and their vocabulary is enlarged.

The group leader or teacher has to be sensitive to such happenings. She should be fully conversant with the aims of pre-primary education and not think of herself as a school teacher armed with a stick! There is a preconceived idea that the stick is the only way of maintaining discipline. If the group is run properly, children will be eager to come and join in the activities. Of course, where there will be the naughty children to deal with but if they realize from the start that they can go so far and no further in their behaviour, then it should not be too difficult for the teacher to control her group. Young children need a sense of security and will respond to firm words if these are consistent.

The children in one group will not all be of the same intelligence. How often the teacher or the Creche Nurse appreciates the bright child who is quick in understanding what is required of him and always gives the right answers! He is always chosen to take part in a drama. He is always given the first chance to lead in a game. What about the shy or the rather dull child, who doesn't respond. Quickly and perhaps hasn't got a very attractive personality or appearance? He is often overlooked and retreats further into his shell. How difficult for the teacher not to have favourites but if she has, this should not be made apparent to the children. She has to show the same love and concern for each one and have patience with the slow or timid child.

In the training of those who will take charge of young children, should be included an idea of how a child develops physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This will help the teacher to see what can or should be expected from a child at a certain age. If there is something lacking or a poor response in a child, she should see that this is investigated, so that it can be remedied if possible. Some children are very slow in learning to talk but often they make up for it later! Many opportunities should be given to encourage children to talk and to increase their vocabulary—stories, rhymes, discussion of pictures, news, nature walk, excursion all help. Dramatic and imaginative play brings out a lot of the children's thoughts, fears, delights and much can be learnt by observing and listening to some of these episodes. Nature walks or a walk round the village can be invaluable from the point of view of observation and conversation. Before the walk the teacher can talk to the children about some of the things to look for. Others may be pointed out on the way and when everyone has returned, discussed in full. The attitude of the teacher can make or mar one of these expeditions. A group of trainees accompanied a group of Creche children to a well known viewpoint. On getting out of

the bus, the trainees stood in a circle round the children. Not one was looking at the view or pointing it out to the children! A lot of opportunity can be missed in this way.

What does the pre-primary child need from his 'teacher'? Up till now he has been at home where mother is the central figure in his life. It can be quite a traumatic experience for the child to be brought by his mother and left with the primary group. First he may not have been told what is going to happen, so it is no surprise when he protests with tears at being 'abandoned' by his mother. The teacher has to be a substitute mother amongst other things, so has to show love and care consistently, to the new child. She has to have patience with the slow developer. She should not expect each picture drawn by the child, to be perfect or need 'touching up' before being put on display.

The teacher should have imagination and not be bound by such things as the three R's in a formal way. If she can improvise and use an unexpected visit or occurrence

to good advantage, all the better. This means expansion in the development of the child.

How many teachers are preapred to listen to children? Often they look upon information comments offered by the children as an interption whatever they are saying or doing. When I was visit my brother's family, my young nephew came home fr school with a sad tale. The teacher had been talking ab people working abroad with special reference to miss naries 'Did you tell your tacher you had a mission auntie at home?' his mother asked. 'I tried to' replied, 'but she said, "Be quiet and put your hand down After that experience he didn't try to share anything w the teacher!

So—to all who would be in charge of pre-primary gro I would say take your five 'stones'—observance, im nation, initiative, patience, caring and enjoy your encou with these young children, knowing that you are help to lay the foundations for education in developme living.

SITUATIONS VACANT

Applications are invited for the following Vacant Posts in the K. J. P. Synod Hospital, Jowai, Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya:

1. A General Surgeon :
Qualification : M.S. In General Surgery.

2. A Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology :
Qualification : M.S. or M.D. in Obstetrics & Gynaecology.
Diploma holders may also apply.

Scales of pay and allowances for the above mentioned posts :

Specialists : 2,100—100—2,600—EB—110—3,150

Diploma holders : 1,950—20—2,400—EB—100—2,900

Plus the following allowances :

(a) N.P.A. (Specialist) Rs. 600 p.m. during the first five years and Rs. 800 p.m. after five years of service.

(Diploma Holder) Rs. 500 p.m. during the first five years and Rs. 600 p.m. after five years of service.

(b) H.R.A. 20% of basic pay.

Pay scales and other allowances are likely to be revised and enhanced in the near future.

Applications with full details should reach the undersigned on or before 31st August, 1989. Candidates will have to appear for an Interview at their own expense when called for.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
K. J. P. SYNOD,
Church House, Mission Compound,
SHILLONG-793 002,
MEGHALAYA.

Traditional, Religious Beliefs and Practices Obstructing Self-Expression and Fulfilment of Womanhood

MRS. RANI WILLIAM MOSES, Coimbatore

Introduction :

India has often been called a country of paradoxes for various reasons and the nature of these paradoxes is more pronounced when we consider the status of women. Even in the Twentieth Century, there are glaring disparities in the status of urban, rural and also that of tribal women in India. Though there is a small section of brilliant women at the Politics, Education, Medicine, Social work, Public health, Law, Nursing, Administration, fine arts and journalism, still a great mass of Indian Women are oppressed and suppressed.

Small and large, in their relationship with the world, the Indian Women remain a pathetic figure. Male chauvinism has refused her basic rights in most lands. Women, due to their lack of vigilance lost ground economically, socially and politically too. They were isolated, so they became powerless. Having no education to their credit, they were unable to challenge the system and submitted to it. Over the ages man has continued as an assertive manipulative power in all spheres of life, where he brings women in, it is a 'HELPER' to ensure the man's interest. So men too have become so conditioned that they easily accept this situation. Atrocities against women continue in the present society.

Let us see to the Traditional Religious beliefs and practices obstructing self-expression and fulfilment of womanhood.

Women in Vedic Time :

An earliest reference to the role of women in the world is found in Rig-Veda IV 3:27 where it is said, 'O Virgin, O young maiden, I take thy hand and thou manifest me for accomplishing the purpose of begetting children. Lady, mayest thou grow old in my company. I grow old in thy company and may live in this way, jointly perform our duties and remain happy.' In addition to this, in a large number of Vedic Verses only a singular designation is used for the husband and wife together. During Vedic period, the two were considered as the two weds on a same chariot :

As to the equality of resource with man was part of the moral ethos of early society. A conscious and deliberate preservation of this status of women came to emerge in our history. The tension between matrilineal and a patrilineal systems in society are clearly evident in the sociological history.

Herewith I am giving a few quotations from the 'Manu-dharma-Sasthra'. The ancient Vedas show no traces of religion before 900 B.C. This invention seems to have been an after thought. Religious laws formulated by man afterwards reflect his wish for his domination over women.

Manu was a law giver of the most perverted Brahminical brand. According to him the nature of women is to seduce men, they lead astray, not only fools, but even learned men ; They should never be granted independence they are not fit for that. Manu equated a woman with a slave and all these are still the sanctioned code of conduct ascribed for, by and large, accepted by women.

'The wife should even treat the husband as God, though he be characterless, sensual and devoid of good qualities (Manu 5-154).'

'Women should follow the word of their husbands. This is the highest duty (Yajnavalkya 1-18).'

'A Woman has no separate Sacrifice, ritual of fasting. She gains a high place in heaven by serving the husband (Manu 5-145).'

'She who fasts and performs rituals, while the husband lives, cuts off the life of the husband. She goes to hell. A woman who is after the Sacred water should wash the feet or the whole body of the husband and drink the water and she attains the highest place (Atri 136-37).'

That woman who prides in her father's family and disobeys the husband should be made by the king of prey to dogs in the presence of a big assembly of people (Manu 8-371).

None should eat the food offered by women who disobeys the husband. Such a woman is to be known as a Sensualist (Angiras-69).

If the wife disobeys the husband when he is given to bad habits or becomes a drunkard or is suffering from physical ailment, then for 3 months, she should be deprived of her valuable clothes and jewels and kept away (Manu 10-75).

Gandhiji says that

'All these scripture quotations need not be taken as the word of God or the inspired word.'

'The greatest of injustices' a great man has said, is that which goes under the name of law and of all sorts of tyranny, the forcing of the letter of the law against the equity, is most insupportable.

Tradition : Women in the Bible

Philip 1-6.
Num. 27 : 1-11.
Lk. 8 : 1-3.
II Kings 22 : 14-20.
Rom 16 : 1-16.

In Patriarchal Hebrew Society, women had a low status. A Woman was identified not as a separate individual. She was always dependent.

Ex. 21 : 7-11. He controlled his daughter's life such as in extreme cases. Sold her into slavery for payment of debt. (Slaves and cattle considered as Man's possession.)

Ex. 20 : 17. A man expected to marry a Virgin—although he did not have to be one.

For the charge of infidelity—she has to under go humiliating and painful ordeal of testing (Num. 5 : 11-31) Judge 19 : 1-30. A woman is subject to her father and husband.

Lev. 121 : 1, 19-24—Unclean periods.

7 days of monthly menstruation.
40 days after the birth of a child.

Laws :

Num. : 27:1-11. The daughter of Zelophehad—demanded for the inheritance of his father property.

II Kings 22 : 14-20—Juldah the prophetess.

Prompted King Josiah—to carry out religious reforms.

Ex. 1 : 15-22—Shiprah and Puah—Hebrew mid-wives disobeyed Pharoh by letting Hebrew male children live.

The woman continued to enjoy her original status even during Mosaic times. The fifth commandment describes the equal status of both father and mother. The existence of bride-price illustrates the fact that the jewels contributed in equal measure as males though their work to a parent's household and hence on their marriage had to be compensated by a 'Marriage Present' from the groom's side. In many of the ancient societies even to this day the practice of bride-price is acknowledged. The reserve practice of 'Dowry' whereby a female is almost literally gotten rid of was a later socio-historical process and the utterly sub-human and barbarian level to which this practice has descended in India in part of the recent history.

When around 1000 B.C. the people's settlements in the then known world began to disperse into unknown territories and consequent on the biological urge for social fission resulting in a new Socio-political work culture the position and role of women underwent a drastic change : the concubines, hundreds of them of King Solomon and such factors were a pointer towards the reduced importance of women. Employment of a new tool-technology,

like the requirements of a Metal Age as against the previous peasantry ethos also qualitatively charged the role of women.

All these changes gradually came to assume religious overtones too. This happened forcefully so that not only countries and cultures like India, but even the Jewish Cultic leaders, rabbis, Pharisees etc., successfully imposed scriptural connotations into the position and status of women. This trend running through even Pauline times has effectively imprisoned the interpretation of women's role in considerable measures even in the contemporary society. So the self-expression and fulfilment of womanhood continues to suffer for want of a satisfactory stereotype mutually materring and fulfilling. The primeval equality and participation emanating from the basis of the integrity of the covenant community (cf. Dt. 31 : 12) is the fore-runner of a New Covenant in Jesus Christ who came in the fulness of time, born of a woman (Gal. 4 : 4).

So eradicating beliefs like the ones mentioned before would be the only path ahead for time equality before God and in the World.

Practices :

The two great evils that most of the women in India are invariably subject to are (i) early marriage and Dowry. The position is, no doubt, considerably better now, but these evils have not as yet been totally eradicated.

Marriage at a tender age :

The tenth year of the girl was considered to be the stage of her pubescence. The sacrosanct law had to be obeyed and the innocent girl had to be married, despatched to an alien house to spend an infernal life there for years to come.

Illiteracy was a passport :

Naturally, a girl was given little or no education during the first ten years of her life. She remained consigned to the dark cave of ignorance at her father's house. In her illiteracy often served as a passport to her marriage as much as old conservative people did not favour the idea of an educated daughter-in-law, in their own interest. They believed that with a broadened mental horizon she may not quite fit in as a drudge and a virtual maid-servant in their house.

Kinds of Dowry :

Dowry can be of two kinds : (i) Payment as the bride price and (ii) payment in cash and kind to the daughter and the son-in-law on their betrothal and marriage. Hindus abhor the demand of the bride's price by the father etc.

Atrocities of Dowry :

Phoolan Devi's Case :

Phoolan Devi, 'the fascinating Dacoit Queen' a teenaged innocent girl (born in 1957) belonging to a backward caste in Gorakhpur village, became the dreaded dacoit by 1981. Apart from her other heinous crimes, she once led a gang of backward caste dacoits from Thakur (a high Caste) village of Behmai (U.P.) in February 14, 1981, and put to death 20 Thakurs there.

minutes and then escaped safely to her hideouts. The main causes of such a fall in her character has been ; her marriage at the age of 10, dispute over her dowry between her father and her husband, her spurning by the husband, her humiliation and rape by the high-caste Brahmins (20 of whom she murdered in revenge) and other evils she received from the society in general. But for the atrocities perpetrated against her, Phoolan Devi would have been in the normal course developed into a docile, obedient daughter-in-law and become an asset to her family and the society. Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.

Post-Independence Period :

The legal disabilities of Women :

- (1) A Woman came within the narrow limit of admitted heirs and could claim only a marginal interest in the divided property of the deceased.

- (2) She could not be a co-partner :

- (3) She forfeited her limited right if she was unchaste.

- (4) She was not legally competent to adopt.

- (5) If her husband wished to adopt, it was not necessary for him to obtain her consent.

- (6) A widow could adopt only with the authority and direction of her deceased husband and though the right of a mother to be guardian of her minor children was recognised, this could be defeated by a testamentary appointment of the deceased husband, in favour of some one else chosen by him.

- (7) A mother could not validly give away her daughter in marriage or appoint a guardian for her children by her will.

My Visit in the Church of South India

MS. JANIE PAYRE, *Australia.*

I was chosen to represent my Church, the Uniting Church in Australia, as an exchange visitor. Having spend short stop-over in Bombay in 1988 I looked forward to doing more and meeting people.

I have travelled within 3 dioceses of the Church of South India for 5 weeks after a few days in Madras on arrival. I spent one week in Tiruchirapalli, Thanjavur, and 2 weeks each in Coimbatore and Karnataka Central. In each area, I have seen the Church at work. I have worshipped in English speaking and Tamil Churches, have visited crèches, schools, boarding homes, training centres and hospitals. I have climbed mountains and even been on a mine !! In each area I have seen many dedicated people working hard to serve their Lord and His people. I enjoyed the visits to crèches and the opportunity to be in the pre-school meetings at Bangalore as my profession in Australia is pre-school teaching. I also enjoyed my hospital visits as my family is mainly involved in nursing. At all times I enjoyed meeting people and talking with them. I enjoyed visiting homes and answering questions about my home, family and Church. I heard about the formation of the Church of South India in my childhood in Scotland. It was spoken of as an example of unity. Since I have been involved in Inter-Church Councils in my new land Australia and also involved in the Uniting Church during its inauguration, I was very interested to see an 'older' united body in action. It has been interesting to see the variety and guess the background of the churches I have worshipped in—I do this is Australia well. I thought I was back in England at some services which were Anglican based. I rejoiced at the lively singing in Tamil speaking congregations even if I couldn't

understand the words. What will remain in my memory is the work being carried out under the auspices of the C.S.I. I have seen many excellent programmes for the young, the women, the poor, the handicapped. I have seen village women working in happy atmospheres and been asked lively questions by them. The hard work and dedication of early missionaries is certainly being carried on and extended today. What I will treasure, most are colourful memories of being beside people who are working so hard to serve their Lord through their neighbours.

If sometimes my comments or answers to questions have seemed critical, excuse me. I come from a church which started in the late 70's with the benefits of exposure to multi-culturalism and ideas of non-sexist, inclusive language. Shortly after the Inauguration of VC of A, an Australia Hymn Book was introduced and while it retains many of the traditional hymns which have stood the test of time, it also allowed for editing and additions of 20th century words and music. Our Church has also just published 'Uniting in Worship' a book of resources for services from a wide variety of traditions which looks as if it will enhance and extend our worship and witness.

I am grateful for this opportunity of a lifetime, grateful to my church for choosing and supporting me, your church for hosting me while in India and to God for this opportunity to share for a short time with the people here. You may be sure I will be telling your story loud and clear when I return home.

'NANDRI'

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE

1. Mrs. K. Kanthamani Christopher Raj and Mrs. M. Sunada Christudas were ordained as deacons by Rt. Rev. K. E. Swamidas, the Bishop of the diocese in the Cathedral at Karimnagar. These are the first women who were ordained as deacons by the diocese. They will stay with their husbands and support them in their ministry.

2. In the Miryalaguda extension area the groundbreaking ceremony took place recently for the construction of a church building which is estimated to cost about Rs. 2,00,000. A good start for the construction work was given by the local congregation by collecting Rs. 13,000. Although the families of the congregation are very poor, they managed to collect so much for the church building which shows their love and enthusiasm for the place of worship. The sincere services rendered by Rev. B. Jaya Prabhakar and Rev. B. Venkataratnam, in the initial stages, are bearing fruits.

3. Bishop Swamidas, conducting three-hour long confirmation services in Kummariakunta and Kukkalgudur, has confirmed 156 candidates and yet in another service, baptised 194 adults and children. This was result of good work done by Deacon B. Andrews of Peddapalli Pastorate.

4. The evangelistic work in the diocese is encouraging. Two batches of evangelists, numbering 30, were appointed to work in the diocese. They were sent to the remote villages. It is a matter of joy to see local congregations coming forward to give financial help to the evangelists.

REV. B. SADANANDAM
Secretary of the Diocese.

RAYALASEEMA DIOCESE

SISTER U. MILCAMMA ISIAH (1919-1989)

Sister U. Milcamma Isaiah served in Rayalaseema Diocese as a Bible woman and did much to build up the work amongst women especially in the villages. She was the much loved leader of a growing band of Bible Women and their assistants. She organised annual retreats for them and summer schools and adult literacy classes for the village women. For several years she was Convener of the Women's Work Committee of the Diocese and was in great demand as a speaker at women's meetings throughout the Diocese. For a time she was Correspondent of the C.S.I. Girls' Boarding Home in Adoni. As a trained teacher she was able to help the children in their studies as well as organise the running of the Hostel and deal with all the correspondence with the children's sponsors in Germany. Although she herself became a Sister of the C.S.I. late in her service, she encouraged many of the younger Bible Women to join the Order. After retirement in 1979 she continued to take interest in the women's

work and was a regular attendee at the Sisters' annual retreats. She was a wonderful friend and colleague of the missionary women workers in the diocese and all who worked with her mourn her passing, but rejoice in the knowledge that she will have been greeted by her Lord and Saviour, 'Well done, My faithful servant'. She was buried in Cuddapah.

MRS. E. S. ROBINSON

VELLORE DIOCESE

A Retreat for the clergy and their families was held at the ELIM centre in Whitefield, Bangalore, from 25th to 27th May. Forty presbyters with their families participated in the retreat. There was a special tour programme arranged to take the children around which covered many places of interest in Bangalore.

Cooperation with other denominations as far as the ministry is concerned was stressed in the retreat. Rev. Dr. D. W. Jesudass, the Principal of Gurukul Theological College and Retreat Centre, Madras was the main speaker who conducted the retreat. Rt. Rev. Dr. Trinity Bhaskar, the Bishop of the diocese, was the chairman, whose leadership and friendly nature was very inspiring and encouraging that brought all the clergy together and instilled new spirit in them to work together for the glory of our Lord. We acknowledge with grateful hearts the generous help received from Dr. K. Rajaratnam Gurukul Centre, Madras, who came forward to meet the entire cost of the retreat.

REV. Y. WILLIAMS
Bishop's Chaplain.

SOUTH KERALA DIOCESE

KERALA'S FIRST WOMAN PRIEST ORDAINED

Mrs. Maragathavalli David, a 38-year-old housewife, became the first woman priest of Kerala on Sunday.

Mrs. David, wife of Pastor Rev. D. David, and mother of two, was ordained Presbyterian at a ceremony held at Mateer Memorial Church.

She was ceremoniously invested with clerical authority by Rt. Rev. Dr. I. Jesudasan, Bishop in South Kerala Diocese.

She and her husband, Rev. David, who is the Vicar of CSI Church at nearby Attingal, thus became the first priestly couple in Kerala.

Daughter of Rev. M. G. Davy, a Deacon, Maragathavalli is a Bachelor of Divinity having completed the three-year course after graduating from the University College, Trivandrum.

With best compliments from :

V. S. Krishnaswami & Co.

45, Armenian Street

MADRAS-600 001

For Quality and Reliable
Transmission Belting, Vee-Belts, and
Rubber Hose Pipes

of "GOOD-YEAR" make

also Contact:—

HELLAM COMPANY

Second Line Beach

POST BOX NO. 142

MADRAS-600 001

PHONE : 22416

A BUSY MAN NEEDS A BANK THAT MEANS BUSINESS.

Looking after your own work hardly leaves you enough time to devote to your day-to-day personal money errands.

Grindlays can be a great help.

We can help you with a prompt, up-to-date statement of accounts; keep your valuable documents and share certificates in safe custody; collect dividends and interest on your behalf; make recurring payments of fixed amounts, e.g., insurance premia, membership subscriptions, etc., automatically against your standing

instructions; offer advice on our wide range of savings plans to suit your needs; and free you to look after your work without routine money-handling worries.

Come to us. You'll find us prompt, attentive, courteous and helpful. We have experts to look after your personal banking needs. And, savings plans and special services that work harder so you don't have to.



Grindlays services just for you:



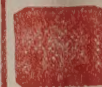
Efficient, personalised service



Prompt, comprehensive replies to correspondence/queries



Regular payments of fixed amounts, e.g., insurance premia, membership subscriptions, recurring deposits, etc., against your standing instructions



Investment counselling on savings plans, and safe custody facilities for documents, shares and other valuables

Grindlays — Professionals in banking



**Grindlays
Bank plc**

Incorporated in the United Kingdom
The liability of members is limited